The original documents are located in Box 38, “9/7/76 - Remarks Upon Signing S. 3542: Teton Dam Disaster Assistance Bill” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice
The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.
THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

SIGNING CEREMONY FOR THE TETON DAM RELIEF LEGISLATION

SEPTEMBER 7, 1976
NO GOVERNMENT HAS THE POWER TO ELIMINATE TRAGEDY FROM HUMAN EXPERIENCE, BUT GOVERNMENT CAN -- ACT QUICKLY TO MINIMIZE THE PAIN OF A GREAT DISASTER AND HELP TO BEGIN THE HEALING PROCESS.

ON THE MORNING OF JUNE 5TH, 1976, THE TETON DAM IN EASTERN IDAHO RUPTURED, AND THE FLOOD WATERS CARRIED DEATH AND DESTRUCTION TO THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES IN THE SNAKE RIVER VALLEY.
THE NEXT DAY, AFTER CONFERRING WITH GOVERNOR ANDRUS, I DECLARED THE AFFECTED COUNTIES TO BE A FEDERAL DISASTER AREA, AND EMERGENCY RELIEF CENTERS WERE QUICKLY ESTABLISHED TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS.

FIVE DAYS LATER, I SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS LEGISLATION APPROPRIATING 200 MILLION DOLLARS FOR COMPENSATION OF THE VICTIMS OF THIS CATASTROPHE WITHIN TEN DAYS FOLLOWING THE FLOOD, SPECIAL OFFICES WERE OPERATING IN IDAHO TO HANDLE DAMAGE CLAIMS.
TODAY I AM SIGNING A BILL WHICH PROVIDES
LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY FOR COMPENSATION OF PERSONAL
AND PROPERTY DAMAGE SUSTAINED BY VICTIMS OF THE FLOOD.

MANY OF THESE CLAIMS HAVE ALREADY BEEN SETTLED AND THE
MONEY IS NOW AT WORK REBUILDING THE LIVES OF THE
SURVIVORS. THE LEGISLATION WHICH I SIGN TODAY INSURES
THAT THIS VITAL AID WILL CONTINUE.

LET ME THANK THE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS FOR THEIR
STRONG BIPARTISAN SUPPORT OF THIS MEASURE. I KNOW
HOW HARD THE IDAHO DELEGATION WORKED ON IT.
CREDIT MUST ALSO BE GIVEN TO THE MANY VOLUNTEER AND CHURCH GROUPS REPRESENTED HERE TODAY WHICH PLAYED SUCH A KEY ROLE IN THE INITIAL RELIEF EFFORTS. EACH OF THEM DISPLAYED GREAT COURAGE UNDER EXCEPTIONALLY DIFFICULT CONDITIONS.

TOGETHER, THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS OF AMERICA HAVE EXTENDED TO THE VICTIMS NOT JUST OUR SYMPATHY, BUT A STRONG AND STEADY HELPING HAND.

END OF TEXT